State Route 76 East Project Unveiled in Caltrans Grand Opening

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Published at 2:18 PM PDT on May 16, 2017

NBC 7

Dignitaries planted the first native and drought-tolerant shrubs at the project's grand opening, according to Caltrans.

A grand opening celebrated the completion of the State Route 76 East Project in Fallbrook Tuesday, confirmed Caltrans.

An investment of $200 million finished a series of significant improvements along the SR-76 corridor between Interstate 15 and 5, according to Caltrans.

Federal, state and local transportation officials celebrated the grand opening at 11 a.m. on the 4300 block of Pala Road at State Route 76.

That included Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty, Caltrans District 11 Director Laurie Berman and Federal Highway Administration Associate Division Administrator Monica Gourdine, according to Caltrans.

"It's gonna improve the lives for commuters who travel along here coming from others places," Berman told NBC 7. "And the people who live along this route won't have to deal with the constant congestion every day."

The project widened the shoulders for cyclists and improved the wildlife connectivity, said Berman.

"Obviously the commuters will benefit from this. Cyclists will benefit from this. You won't have as much congestion and choke points, but also the environment is benefiting from this," said Berman.

After a performance by the Fallbrook High School Madrigals, some dignitaries will plant the first native and drought tolerant shrubs, according to Caltrans.

"When we first moved here -- of course it was one lane in each direction -- and you had to cross over the Old Bonsall Bridge" said Elaine Davis, a community member.

"I should have wore my sweatshirt today that says I survived crossing over the Bonsall bridge because it was so narrow with a very sharp right-hand turn at the end of it," said Davis.

There are further plans to landscape the area with similar drought tolerant shrubs. The project includes improved connectivity for wildlife.